Macular Society

Together we can

Impact and Accountability Report

1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

Thank you

I am incredibly proud to have joined the Macular Society as chief executive last summer. Thank you to our wonderful macular community for welcoming me and to my predecessor Cathy Yelf, who left the Society in such a strong position after 16 years of dedicated service.

Over the past year we have achieved a great deal together. We have funded ground-breaking research projects, expanded support services to reach more people and harnessed the power of technology to better understand the causes of macular disease and how to treat it.

Here in the UK, thousands of people are affected by macular disease. Over the next few pages, I want to highlight some of our achievements this year and explore how we're moving closer to our goal: to **Beat Macular Disease** for good.

The dedication of our members, volunteers, staff and wider community never fails to inspire me. With this shared commitment, I'm confident that we will find a cure for macular disease.

Thank you for standing with us.

Ed Holloway
Macular Society

Chief executive

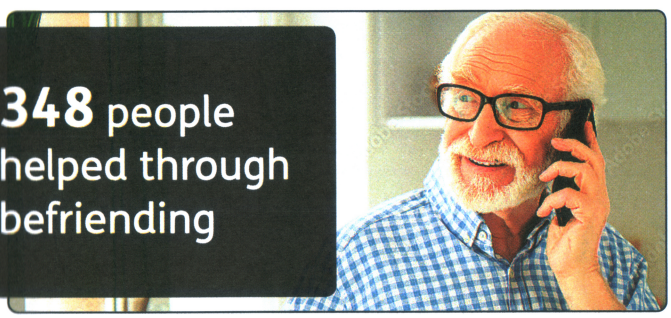
How we did it together

15,883 Macular Society members

325 support groups continued to meet (in-person and online) with 7,676 members

1,157 counselling sessions delivered to 544 people

348 people helped through befriending



800+ working age and young people supported each other in our Facebook group

38 live research projects underway

5 new 'seedcorn' early-stage research projects funded

5,000+ people registered to our research participant database

36,000+ views of our online webinars

19,200 calls and emails to our helpline

Thank you to our **1,023** dedicated volunteers

Together we are . . .

Finding a cure

Funding new research

£868,000 in new research grants was awarded.

- We funded the Macular Society's first research fellowship, in partnership with the **Daphne Jackson Trust**.

Driving collaborations

- In 2023/24 we became a member of the **UK Ageing Research Funders Forum** (UKARFF) to unite funders of academic and clinical research into ageing and age-related disease. In 2024/25 terms of reference for the group were agreed and UKARFF hosted a conference to support early career researchers.
- The Macular Society, Fight for Sight, Glaucoma UK and Retina UK came together to form the CERT partnership (**Charities in Eye Research Transformation**) to facilitate joint work, leading to more treatments and therapies for the prevention and management of sight loss through research.
- We are making progress on developing a **Clinical Trial Delivery Accelerator** (CTDA) for ophthalmology, to speed up recruitment, increase the number of clinical trials and allow patients better access to new treatments.

Harnessing technology

- We hosted a scientific meeting to map out the biological features which need to be modelled to create the first-ever Virtual Eye.
- Our charity collaboration **Action Against AMD** (AAAMD) has begun to acquire pilot data to analyse eye scans to identify earlier signs of age-related macular degeneration.

"I'm so grateful for this fantastic opportunity to kickstart my research following a career break."

Dr Louise Terry, Optometrist and University of Cardiff lecturer

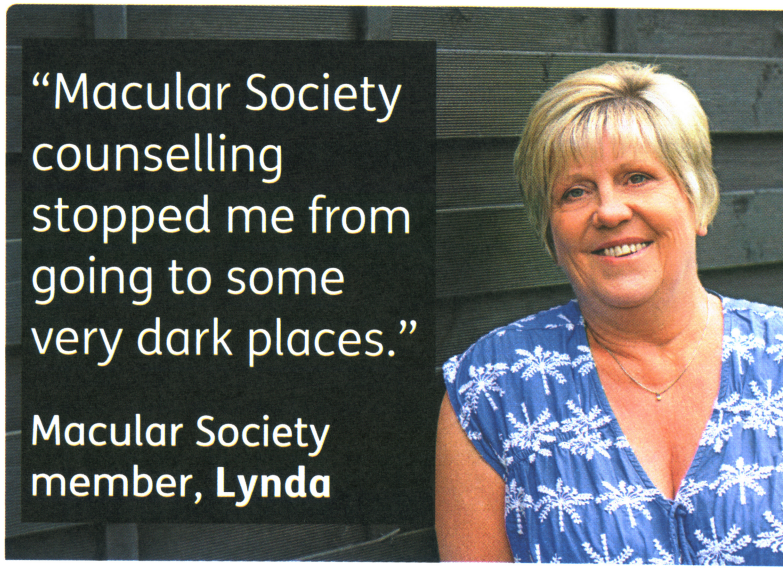
Daphne Jackson TRUST

Together we provide . . .

The best advice and support

Support for you

- The 2024 Macular Disease Conference attracted 5,558 people and a further 4,000 people watched recordings by the end of March 2025.
- Our new online condition-specific groups, focused on rarer conditions, supported 55 members each month.
- The counselling service expanded to include groups on topics such as employment, being newly diagnosed and Charles Bonnet syndrome (visual hallucinations often associated with sight loss).



"We can support each other and that has been quite marvellous." Macular Society members **Karen and Lynne**, who joined the newly created MacTel 2 online support group.

Listening to your feedback

- Our first annual service user impact and evaluation survey was sent to people who received direct support in 2023. A total of 98% of respondents would recommend the Macular Society to peers and 90% said they trusted the information obtained from the charity.
- In late 2024 we launched our first Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP), made up of 15 people with lived experience of a macular condition themselves or as a carer for someone with macular disease.

Our volunteers

- We worked with our volunteer community to produce our first volunteer handbook and offer improved support.

Together we ensure . . .

Vision matters

Engaging with policy makers

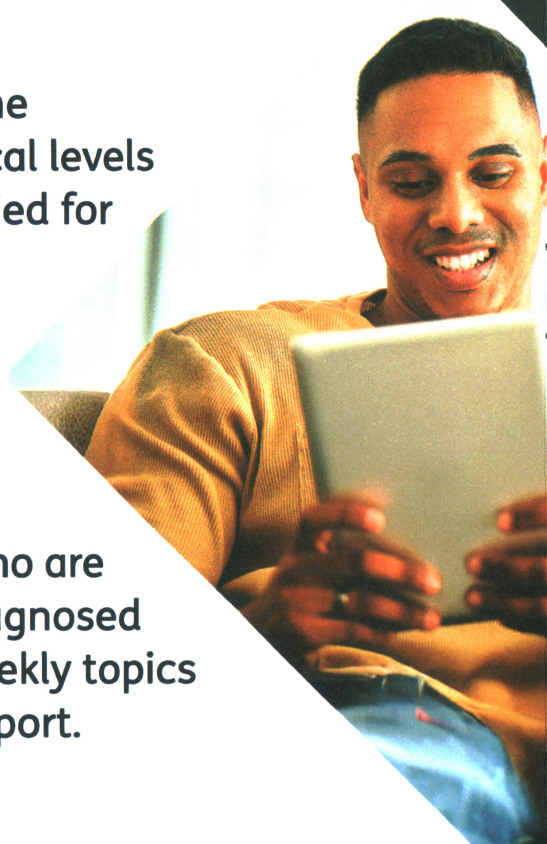
- Our partnership, **The Eyes Have It** (TEHI), met with parliamentarians on Westminster Eye Health Day 2024 and, in early 2025, held an exhibition in the Houses of Parliament to raise awareness of the urgent need for a dedicated national eye health policy. We have made submissions to the 10-year health plan and eagerly await the outcome.

Eye charity collaboration

- We are part of the **'Visual Impairment Charity Sector Collaboration'** of eight eye charities. In 2024/25, work concentrated on creating a patient support journey, developing an online tool to help find useful technology and producing an online research data hub for key reports.
- It also focused on promoting the needs and abilities of visually impaired people in the workplace and, this year, we partnered with the Thomas Pocklington Trust to employ three visually impaired interns.

Regional action

- We have continued to engage with the NHS in the redevelopment of eye care services at more local levels and in the devolved nations. In Wales, we lobbied for action to reduce long waiting lists for wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD) treatment in some areas.



Education

- An email campaign was launched for people who are new to the Society or who have been newly diagnosed with a macular condition. It introduced key weekly topics and signposted to further information and support.

Macular Society summarised accounts

Total income for the 12-month period to 31 March 2025 was £8,865k, and our total costs were £7,616k, resulting in a surplus of £1,249k. This reflects the impact of some temporary reductions in expenditure in response to last year's deficit, as well as some timing issues in relation to both income and expenditure. We do not believe it reflects a longer-term shift in the balance between income and expenditure.

Statement of financial activities
for the year ending 31 March 2025

	Unrestricted funds £'00	Restricted funds £'000	Total £'000
Total income	6,607	2,258	8,865
Total expenditure	(3,574)	(4,042)	(7,616)
Net income/(expenditure) before other gains and losses	(3,033)	(1,784)	1,249
Other gains/(losses) and transfers	(1,553)	1,458	(95)
Net movement in funds	1,480	(326)	1,154
Total funds brought forward	2,462	3,153	5,615
Total funds carried forward	**3,942**	**2,827**	**6,769**

Balance sheet
as at 31 March 2025

	2025 £'000
Fixed assets	1,942
Current assets	8,099
Less: current liabilities	(1,806)
Net current assets	6,293
Creditors due after more than one year	(1,466)
Total net assets	**6,769**

Together we will . . .

Beat Macular Disease

"Medical science is improving the quality of life for everyone. Maybe it can change Archie's life. Maybe mine.

"For my son, for our children's children - if there's anything we can do to stop this, we absolutely must do it."

Macular Society member Sian and her son, Archie.

"We all know that research for cures are being looked into, so fingers crossed there will be something out there one day that can help me and others to keep our vision for longer."

Macular Society member Nancy

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